



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Examiner: E. Garcia

Art Unit: 3629

In re:

Applicant: WESTERMANN

Serial No.: 09/319,842

Filed: August 9, 1999

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

May 1, 2002

Hon. Commissioner of
Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

This Amendment is submitted preliminarily to the issuance of an Office Action in the above identified application.

With the present Amendment applicants have submitted additional clarification of the new features of the present invention and their differences from the prior art applied in the parent case.

The bearing element in accordance with the present invention must be suitable for hinging wiper blades on a hook-shaped end of a wiper rod, which can have two different widths. For this purpose the side walls have guiding surfaces which face toward one another, between which the wiper rod or the hook-shaped end is guided. The distance between the guiding surfaces, or in other words the narrowest distance, is different at the sides which are opposite to the hub, as identified with reference numerals 40, 42 in Figure 3. It is not important whether the side walls in the regions which do not serve for guiding the wiper rod have a greater distance from one another. What is important is only the distance in the region of the guiding surfaces.

The European patent document '373 discloses side walls 12, of which only the surfaces 16 serve for the lateral guidance of the wiper rod. The regions 24 of the walls 12 have however a greater distance from one another. However, they do not serve for lateral guidance of the wiper rod. It is comparable with the greater distance of the side walls 32, 34 at the left side in Figure 3 of the present application, formed by the corrugations 44 which form the smallest distance 40.

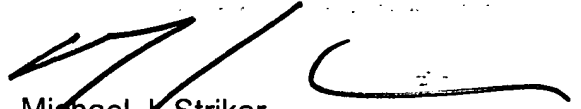
It is therefore believed to be clear that the reference does not disclose the new features of present invention and does not provide any hint or suggestion for such features, since in the shown embodiment of the bearing element no wiper rods of different widths can be used.

It is believed that the claims currently on file clearly and patentably distinguish the present invention from the above discussed reference and therefore these claims should be allowed.

Consideration and allowance of present application is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue. Any costs involved should be charged to the deposit account of the undersigned (No. 19-4675). Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Striker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael J. Striker
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 27233